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GOVERNMENT

Caprio, union join forces to reorganize Treasury

BY PBN STAFF

General Treasurer Frank T. Caprio and union representative Sal Lombardi last week announced a plan to reorganize the R.I. Treasury Department.

"I came into office with a commitment to making the Treasury Department the most customer-friendly in state government and this reorganization will help us achieve that goal," Caprio said, adding: "As part of this process, we have established new initiatives that will enhance our entire staff and move everyone forward as individuals who put customer service at the top of their priority list."

The agreement calls for the creation of more-flexible job descriptions, to allow workers to be shifted from one department to another to meet customer needs; the establishment of a call center for the state retirement system, to ease access to information and services; and the addition of customer-service training modeled on successful private efforts such as those at Gem Plumbing and Fidelity Investments. It also calls for the establishment of a formal review and recognition program for all managers and employees.

"As a result of this reorganization,"

said Lombardi, president of Local 2884 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, "the employees I represent will gain valuable experience in different departments and enjoy the opportunity for upward mobility in the future, which is something most state employees don't have."

The plan was the result of several months of negotiations, in which Edward Mazze, former dean of the University of Rhode Island's College of Business Administration, helped the union and Caprio to develop a new, customer service-based approach.

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FRANK T. CAPRIO
R.I. general treasurer

"A major goal of this reorganization was to resolve all outstanding matters with the union so we can focus on the future," Caprio said. To that end, along with the reorganization plan, the union has agreed to withdraw its pending lawsuit and grievance over the 2005 termination of

26-year Treasury employee Marion Solomon, while the state has agreed to reinstate Solomon - effective July 1, but without back pay.

"This is a great partnership," Mazze said, one that "should serve as a model for what other state departments need to do when seeking to provide vital services in the middle of a budget crisis." ■